

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

VOL. IX

MARCH, 1909

NO. 6

EDITORIAL COMMENT



PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

THIS season finds the nurses in eight states in the midst of legislative action. Three of the far western states, Washington, Wyoming, and Oklahoma, are making their first effort for state registration, and with bills excellently well drawn, containing the vitally essential points of a nurse board of examiners, recommended by the state association, with a minimum educational requirement of two years in the hospital.

In Oklahoma, the nurses have had the misfortune to lose the senator, Dr. Johnson, who was leading their bill. He died suddenly after the bill had passed the lower house, with only two opposing votes, and when it was on its third reading in the senate. His work had been so thorough and effective that the nurses leading the movement feel sanguine of its success, however.

Tennessee has presented a bill which was defeated in February, but which has been promised reconsideration.

It will be remembered that in West Virginia the board of examiners is composed entirely of medical men. Two members of this board, one the proprietor of a private sanitarium, and the other of an insane asylum, have put in an amendment to the bill, without the state association or the nurses being notified, so changing it in its most essential points that if passed it would make the bill practically worthless. The nurses are now working vigorously to defeat these amendments.

In Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, the nurses have gone forward undaunted, after a number of failures in each instance. In Michigan and Massachusetts, the bills as presented contain the essential features referred to above; but the Pennsylvania nurses have made concessions which, if the bill passes, will, in our judgment, be unfortunate for the profession at large.

In Massachusetts, some of the difficulties which confront the nurses are shown in the report of the secretary of the state association, given in the official department of this magazine. In addition to these impediments which amount almost to constitutional obstruction the nurses at their hearing on February 11 were met with open opposition from a group of physicians, led by Dr. Charles H. Cook, who presented an opposition bill which had practically for its motive the recognition of the Waltham School, calling for no definite educational qualification in the applicant for state registration, making it possible for a woman without hospital training to come up for examination; the board of examiners to be the board of medical registration, assisted by two discreet and loyal women who are to aid in conducting the examinations, no person to be eligible for such appointment who is not a graduate of a training school giving at least a two years' course in the theory and practice of nursing, no hospital requirements being designated.

Dr. Alfred Worcester, who is the father of the Waltham system, took the floor in defense of his own school, making an appeal to the Public Health Committee for justice which he claims is being denied the Waltham nurses by their exclusion from registration in the other states having laws. Ex-Governor Bates, who was in charge of the nurses' bill, asked Dr. Worcester if he did not think the combined wisdom of sixteen states worth more than his own and that of the physicians of South Framingham and Natick who are supporting the Waltham system. Both bills were defended by able medical men.

It would seem as if the nurses of Massachusetts are in advance of the medical profession in their efforts to secure as high professional standards as those obtaining in other states. No group of nurses in their efforts for registration have had to meet such bitter opposition from physicians of high standing.

When we speak of two years in the hospital as being one of the imperative requirements of a registration bill, we mean that two years is the minimum requirement, in other words, the very least that the state is willing to recognize as providing sufficient time in which to acquire the necessary knowledge and experience, and it is not to be interpreted that two years is recommended or that this requirement is in any way mandatory.

We have many times, since the period of registration commenced in this country, made the statement through these pages and personally that a state is much better without any law for registration than with one which legalizes too low or undesirable standards of education, or which is so drawn as to handicap nursing progress in any form. The

experience of states having secured bills confirms this judgment as time goes on, and we say again to those nurses who may fail, or who may choose to withdraw their bills if they are spoiled in their progress through the Legislature, that it is infinitely better to wait indefinitely for a good bill than to accept one that is not in its essential features desirable.

As we go to press, we learn that the Massachusetts nurses have again withdrawn their bill, and that the Washington bill has passed the house with 92 out of 95 votes, the only important amendment being the taking of the appointing power out of the hands of the nursing association and placing it absolutely with the governor. No opposition is anticipated in the senate.

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

THE Conference on the Care of Dependent Children which was held in Washington on the 25th and 26th of January at the call of President Roosevelt is universally hailed by thoughtful, progressive people as epoch-making in the course of civilization. Our readers can find ample reports of this conference in *Charities and the Commons*, and other public journals, and in the absence of space to reproduce adequately the details connected with it we shall limit ourselves to relating a little of the history of the beginnings of this movement, which must be of special interest and a matter of pride and gratification to nurses.

The conception of a National Children's Bureau in one of the federal departments of the government originated with a nurse, Lillian D. Wald, head worker of the Nurses' Settlement in New York City.

About three years ago Miss Wald, who had been much engrossed in child-saving movements, thought out the plans for a federal government department which should do for the child all that the agricultural department does for the country, and laid her idea before Mrs. Florence Kelley, who said, "I believe that you have a gold mine here." Mrs. Kelley then spoke to Dr. Edward Devine, and Dr. Devine wrote to the President, who immediately, with his accustomed energy, telegraphed for Miss Wald and Dr. Devine to go to Washington, and later gave the subject space in his message to Congress. In this way the movement for a National Children's Bureau arose.

Last year a bill was presented to Congress but did not come to a vote; this year it is to be presented again, and the conference unanimously resolved that the Bureau should be created and that the President should be asked to send a special message to Congress in its behalf.

At the dinner which closed the conference Miss Wald was requested to speak on the proposition: "Should there be established in one of the federal departments a National Children's Bureau, one of whose objects shall be the collection and dissemination of accurate information in

regard to child-caring work and in regard to the needs of children throughout the United States." Her speech was considered remarkably able, and impressed the men by its non-sentimental force. It is to be printed in the Congressional Record.

SOME USES OF CONVENTIONS

WE had recently the pleasure of spending the evening with a returned "immigrant," and though it is now half a year since her journey to the Pacific Coast, her face shines and her voice is full of enthusiasm when she speaks of it. "It has made me over," she declared, "that long trip, with all those nurses, all such fine women. I used to think my own school was the only one in the country worth caring for; now I am interested in all schools, and I feel a fellowship with every graduate nurse I meet. Then, too, I don't worry about little things as I used to. After spending several weeks in San Francisco, and seeing the courage and faith of those people, who lost in the fire everything they owned, I think I can face life with hope if they can."

This nurse is already planning to take her vacation the first week in June in order to go to Minneapolis, and she is inspiring others to do the same. She told us of plans being made by different groups of friends to meet and proceed by river, lakes, or overland to the convention, or to take outings together further west when it is over.

The greatest and best use of our national gatherings is the lifting of an individual above her narrow round of interests, giving her a broader outlook and deeper sympathies. A nurse can do far better work, wherever that work may lie, if she catches an occasional glimpse of nursing as a whole, with its noble army of workers; her own part may seem tiny, but it is a needed part of a splendid whole.

The convention in Minneapolis this year is threefold—the Superintendents' Society, the Federation, and the Associated Alumnae. Any nurse is welcome to attend any or all of these meetings; admission is not limited to delegates or permanent members. Every superintendent should plan to stay after her own special meetings for the others, and all delegates should try to reach Minneapolis in time for the Federation, and, if possible, for the Superintendents' Society, as our interests are one. For the benefit of the newest of our members we wish to explain once more that the Federation is simply a coming together of the two national societies. Its meetings are due once in three years, and last year was the appointed time, but as the superintendents did not wish to go so far west as California, it was deferred until this year.

June is a propitious month for our gatherings, for most schools have finished their year's work, and tired superintendents and head

nurses can take an outing with a free conscience; private duty nurses can plan their vacations for this season, and there could not be a more inviting gathering place than Minneapolis, situated as it is in the midst of lakes, several of which are actually included within its city limits. For those who can afford a longer outing, Yellowstone Park beckons, not so very much further on.

We wish to call attention of all officers of associations to the notices of the secretary of the Associated Alumnae which appear at the head of our news items. Much time and labor are saved national officers if such requests are promptly complied with.

It is hoped that on account of the Alaska Yukon fair, some reduction in railroad rates may be obtained.

The dates of the meetings are: Superintendents' Society, Monday and Tuesday, June 7 and 8; Federation, Wednesday, June 9; Associated Alumnae, Thursday and Friday, June 10 and 11.

Some of the subjects to be considered in papers and discussions are, in the Superintendents' Society: "The Nursing of Children," "Obstetrics," "Special Preparation for Private Duty," "Preparation of the Nurse for Institutional Work," "The Nursing of Contagious Diseases," and "Ethics between Training Schools;" in the Federation: "Moral Prophylaxis," "Infant Problems," "Almshouse Nursing," "Statistics of Number and Kinds of Social Service Work, in which Nurses are Engaged," "Reorganization of the National Societies;" in the Associated Alumnae: "Hospital Economics Course, the Work of Its Graduates," "Post-operative Care Without Drugs," "Hopeful Aspects of Tuberculosis," "District Nursing and How to Organize," "Supplying Nurses for People of Moderate Means," "The Nurse as an Anaesthetist."

THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION

THE temperance question has been transferred from being the absorbing topic of a few zealots to its rightful place as one of the moral problems of the nation. On every hand we hear it discussed, or read of it in new lights, rational and scientific, as well as religious. We have to thank the zealots for holding on so long in the face of discouragement and rejoice that at last communities and states are giving it serious attention.

At the meeting of the State Charities Aid Association held in Albany in early February, Mr. Choate, in his opening address, declared that to the curse of intemperance is due "most of the mischiefs and evils that fill our hospitals, our asylums, our prisons, and our public charitable institutions of every kind." Dr. Albert Warren Ferris, president of the State Commission in Lunacy, condemned the "moderate" use of alcohol unqualifiedly, and said that one-fourth of the insane men of the state

lost their reason through the use of alcoholic beverages. He declared that the greatest single factor in the production of insanity is alcoholism.

An interesting and unusual series of articles has been appearing in *McClure's Magazine*, December-February, on the alcohol question, by Dr. Henry Smith Williams. The first two dealt with the effects of alcohol on the individual organism and on the community. The last is on the scientific solution of the liquor problem. He shows why wholesale prohibition is impracticable and impossible and advocates such a system as has been tried in Sweden, beginning forty years ago, by which the business of selling liquor is placed in the hands of certain companies that pay regular salaries to their employees. No profits are allowed either to the company or its men, but surplus funds are spent in public improvements. The practical result has been that the number of distilleries has been reduced from 23,000 to 132 and the number of saloons in proportion to the inhabitants is something like 1 to 13,000, while in some places in America we have one to every 35 voters. England is working along these lines by the establishment of refreshment halls where social life and non-intoxicating drinks are provided, together with gymnasia. It is recommended that in this country play grounds and places of innocent recreation be increased, for it is not enough to prohibit harmful things; some substitute must be offered.

Dr. Williams lays stress on the fact that investigations have shown that the drinking habit is nearly always formed in youth, and that the man who does not taste liquor till his majority runs less risk of acquiring drinking habits in their worst form. He makes the startling statement, from statistics gathered at Bellevue, "that of 259 instances where the age of beginning to drink was known, four began before six years of age; thirteen between the ages of six and twelve; sixty between twelve and sixteen; and 102 between sixteen and twenty-one."

THE NEW JOURNAL BUREAUS

IN our September editorial department we announced the establishment of two departments in our business office which were to be developed—a directory for hospitals and nurses, and an agency for books of all kinds. These two departments are now in full operation. The aim of the directory is to bring into touch with each other, nurses seeking hospital positions, and hospitals in need of the services of experienced women. The department does not profess to recommend either party to the other; it collects certain information for the benefit of each, and puts them in touch in such a way that further details may be easily obtained. For instance, in the case of the hospitals, there can be given the size of the institution, the number of beds, of nurses, salary paid,

etc.; in the case of a nurse, the kind of position she is seeking, the experience she has had, the minimum salary she is willing to accept.

If a nurse has a legitimate reason for wishing to make a change, she can file an application with our office and secure an opportunity for advancement without disturbing her relations with her present board until she has definite work in view.

We quote a letter from a superintendent of a hospital as showing the effect of the agency in securing assistance.

"Again we are appealing to you, as your recent efforts in our behalf were so eminently successful.

"This time we are seeking an energetic, experienced and capable young woman for chief nurse in our operating room. Salary to be fifty (50) dollars per month and no calls at night except in extraordinary cases. Such other duties as deemed needful to be arranged by the superintendent of nurses. It is desirable that the vacancy should be filled at an early date.

"I insisted upon writing this myself in order to say what I did at the beginning and further, to thank you for sending to us two such splendid women. I only hope you may again succeed."

A moderate fee is charged, sufficient to cover the expense of the bureau.

THE BOOK DEPARTMENT

We would call the attention of our readers to the list of books published in the advertising pages in the back of this magazine, with rules for ordering them appended. This department is developing very satisfactorily and promises to be a great convenience to busy superintendents, and to nurses who are isolated from shopping centres. The same careful attention is paid to an order for one book as for a hundred. Books ordered need not be those included in the list mentioned, nor need they be nursing books. The prices are as low as if the books were obtained directly from the publisher. Miss Davis will be glad to furnish further information on request or to give advice on the choice of books.

JOURNALISTIC COURTESY

Nor only professions, but almost all trades, are governed in their mutual relations by written or unwritten laws. In no occupation are rules of courtesy more strictly drawn or more generally observed than in journalism.

We have frequent evidence that some of our contributors and other journals disregard some of these established customs. We give a few of the points disregarded, believing that it is ignorance rather than wilful intention that brings such slips.

First, an article sent to one magazine for publication should not be

sent at the same time to another, or sent afterward, unless definitely refused by the first. No journal of good standing offers to its readers as original material anything which is known to have appeared elsewhere; if quotations are made of either a whole or part of an article, due credit is given to the first publication, and never more than a few paragraphs are quoted unless permission has been obtained.

When an article published has been first read in the form of a paper before some association, that fact is always stated in a foot-note. When a society has an official organ of its own, or uses another magazine in that way, the recognized journal should receive the first and fullest reports of proceedings.

CURRENT LITERATURE OF INTEREST TO NURSES

WE were asked recently by a JOURNAL reader to suggest articles appearing in current literature which it would be of interest or benefit to nurses to read. This we are happy to do and give a partial list here of the good things that have been appearing. We shall try hereafter to make this a regular feature of Miss Scovil's department (Notes from the Medical Press), and by her aid can quote more extensively from medical literature.

McClure's, January: "The Mortality of Overweights and Underweights," Brandreth Symonds, M.D.; "Veronica and the Angelinos" by Caspar Day. (This is for those who love babies, and is delightful for reading aloud.) *McClure's*, February: "Work at the Rockefeller Institute," Burton J. Hendrick; "The Scientific Solution of the Liquor Problem," Henry Smith Williams, M.D.

The Century, February: "Dangers of the Emmanuel Movement," Dr. James M. Buckley.

The Ladies' Home Journal, February: "The Results of the Emmanuel Movement," Elwood Worcester, D.D.

Charities, January 23: "What Should a Probation Officer do for the Child?" Henry W. Thurston. All the recent numbers of *Charities* contain invaluable articles on child labor, too numerous to mention separately.

The Journal of the American Medical Association, January 23: "Tuberculin Treatment," E. L. Trudeau, M.D.; "Suggestion for the Treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," Austin O'Malley, M.D.; an editorial on "The Leprosy Problem in Hawaii," and "The Food Value of Meat Extracts and Meat Juices." January 30: "Night Camps for the Tuberculous," William Charles White, M.D.; "Acne," an editorial on "The Pharmacology of Tobacco Smoke." February 6: "Anæmias of Infancy," John Lovett Morse, M.D.; "Deaf-mutism," Maury M. Stapler, M.D. February 13: "Individual Tendencies"; an editorial on "Dr. Wiley and Benzoate of Soda."